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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/852,519	05/10/2001	Donald E. Gillespie	DEG-10002/29	6344

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EXAMINER

SHARAREH, SHAHNAM J

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1617

DATE MAILED: 02/26/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/852,519	GILLESPIE, DONALD E.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Shahnam Sharareh	1617

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 December 2002.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) 9-21 is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-8 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) 9-21 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

- Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
- Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
- Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____.

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Applicant's election with traverse of Group I, claims 1-8 in Paper No. 4 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that claim 9 makes direct reference to "the punctuam plug of claim 1," demanding examination of claims 1-15. This is not found persuasive because claim 9 is a methodology that can be practiced by other systems where no optical element is required. Even the application itself admits that the claimed plug can be employed in such systems where no optical element is required. (see specification, page 4, lines 16-17, where visualization can be done with the unaided eye). Thus, the product as claimed can be used in materially different process. Accordingly, restriction requirement is proper.

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

Claims 9-21 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Applicant timely traversed the restriction (election) requirement in Paper No. 4.

This application contains claims 9-21 drawn to an invention nonelected with traverse in Paper No. 4. A complete reply to the final rejection must include cancelation of nonelected claims or other appropriate action (37 CFR 1.144) See MPEP § 821.01.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-8 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The term "more easily" in claim 1 is a relative term which renders the claim indefinite. The term "more easily" is not defined by the claim, the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree, and one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention.

Claim 8 recites the limitation "the invention" in 8. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-4, 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by L'Esperance US Patent 5,300,020.

L'Esperance discloses an implantable device for controlling drainage flow of aqueous fluid from the anterior chamber of the eye. (abstract). Accordingly, the device of L'Esperance meets the limitations of the instant plug. The device of L'Esperance contains an outwardly exposed surface (see figure 1, element # 17; col 2, lines 55-65). L'Esperance further teaches that his plug contains an energy-absorbing compound such

as fluorescent or Rose Bengal at the tubular section of the plug. Accordingly, L'Esperance anticipates the limitations of the instant claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Seder et al US Patent 4,959,048 or Freeman US Patent 3,949,750 in view of Gwon et al US Patent 5,178,635.

Seder and Freeman both teach punctual plugs that are flexible and suitable in dimension and of material to be inserted into punctual apertures. The plugs of both Freeman and Seder have an outwardly exposed surface (see abstracts, figures). Seder's and Freeman's plugs do not have a substance that can cause the plug to be more easily visualized.

Gwon is merely used to show that suitable dyes and fluorescent tracers have been used in the art as a means for improving visualization in ophthalmic devices. (col 5, lines 30-50). Gwon explicitly teaches that a tracer may be incorporated into the insert by physical admixture or dissolution into the implant matrix. (col 5, lines 47-50). Such tracer is able to illuminate with light at its own illumination wavelength (as required by the instant claims 5-7). Accordingly, using a tracer in the matrix of an ophthalmic device is a general knowledge available in the art.

Thus, Even though neither Seder nor Freeman teach a tracer in their plug, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to employ a tracer such as florescence into the matrix of Seder's or Freeman's plugs, because as taught by Gwon, the ordinary artisan would have had a reasonable expectation of success in improving the visualization of the plug in the recipient's eyes.

Conclusion

No claims are allowed. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Shahnam Sharareh whose telephone number is 703-306-5400. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30 am - 6:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Sreenivasan Padmanabhan, PhD can be reached on 703-308-1877. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-308-4556 for regular communications and 703-308-4556 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-1123.

ss
February 23, 2003


RUSSELL TRAVERS
PRIMARY EXAMINER
GROUP 1200